(b) if so, whether any action was taken to reduce the economic cost; and

(c) if so, the action taken, alongwith the timing of action and the result thereof with regard reducing the cost?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN) : (a) to (c) To arrive at ways and means for reducing the Economic Cost of wheat and rice an independent consultant namely, the Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad, has been engaged to study the cost of acquisition and distribution of foodgrains by the FCI. Further measures to contain/reduce the economic cost will be taken by the FCI/Government on receipt of the report of the A.S.C.I., Hyderabad and decisions thereon.

Import of Wheat

4276. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that despite excess stock of wheat in Indian granaries, wheat was imported;

(b) if so, why this has been done deliberately;

(c) the financial details of the imported wheat in the last fiscal year; and

(d) the cost per tonne of imports and its sale price in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) There has been no import of wheat on Government account during the last financial year i.e. 1999-2000. Government has imposed 50% duty on wheat imports w.e.f. 1-12-1999, which has checked the import of wheat on private account also.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

PDS Sugar to income-tax Assessees

4277. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA' Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the policy of not supplying sugar through PDS to the IT assesses is not being implemented;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor,

(c) whether Government have received requests from different States

for providing guidelines in this regard;

(d) if so, the action taken thereon; and

(e) if not, by when Government proposed to do so?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (V. SREENIVASA PRASAD) : (a) to (c) A few State Governments did intimate the Central Government about their inability in identifying the income tax assessees and their family members for exclusion from Public Distribution System (PDS) in respect of Sugar. However, after a meeting of the State Government officers concerned to finalise the modalities, it has been decided to give the State Governments time upto 30.06.2000 to complete the process of identification of all the card holders who are also income tax assessees and exclude them for the purpose of distribution of sugar under the PDS.

Export of Wheat and Rice

†4278. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA :

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the reserve storage of wheat and rice in the country is more than the requisite storage quantity;

(b) if so, whether Government have found out possibilities of exporting this wheat and rice;

(c) if so, the quantum of wheat exported during the year 2000, along with names of the countries;

(d) the price of the exported wheat; and

(e) the names of countries to which offer has been made so far to sell this wheat and rice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) The stocks of foodgrains (wheat and rice) particularly that of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.